Numb. 92

The TATLER.

By *Iſaac Bickerſtaff* Eſq;

Falſus Honor juvat, & mendax Infamia terret
Quem niſi mendoſum & mendacem ? —— Hor.

From *Tueſday November* 8. to *Thurſday November* 10. 1709.

White's Chocolate-houſe, November 9.

I Know no Manner of Speaking ſo offenſive as that of giving Praiſe, and cloſing it with an Exception; which proceeds (where Men do not do it to introduce Malice, and make Calumny more effectual) from the common Error of conſidering Man as a perfect Creature. But if we rightly examine Things, we ſhall find, that there is a Sort of Oeconomy in Providence, that one ſhall excel where another is defective, in order to make Men more uſeful to each other, and mix them in Society. This Man having this Talent, and that Man another, is as neceſſary in Converſation as one profeſſing one Trade, and another another, is beneficial in Commerce. The happieſt Climate does not produce all Things; and it was ſo ordered, that one Part of the Earth ſhould want the Product of another, for uniting Mankind in a general Correſpondence and good Underſtanding. It is therefore Want of good Senſe as well as good Nature, to ſay *Simplicius* has a better Judgment, but not ſo much Wit, as *Latius*; for that theſe have not each other's Capacities, is no more a Diminution to either, than if you ſhould ſay, *Simplicius* is not *Latius*, or *Latius* not *Simplicius*. The Heathen World had ſo little Notion that Perfection was to be expected amongſt Men, that among them any one Quality or Endowment in an Heroick Degree made a God. *Hercules* had Strength; but it was never objected to him that he wanted Wit. *Apollo* preſided over Wit, and it was never asked whether he had Strength. We hear no Exceptions againſt the Beauty of *Minerva*, or the Wiſdom of *Venus*. Theſe wiſe Heathens were glad to immortalize any one ſerviceable Gift, and overlook all Imperfections in the Perſon who had it: But with us it is far otherwiſe, for we reject many eminent Virtues, if they are accompanied with one apparent Weakneſs. The reflecting after this Manner, made me account for the ſtrange Delight Men take in reading Lampoons and Scandal, with which the Age abounds, and of which I receive frequent Complaints. Upon mature Conſideration, I find it is principally for this Reaſon, that the worſt of Mankind, the Libellers, receive ſo much Encouragement in the World. The low Race of Men take a ſecret Pleaſure in finding an eminent Character levelled to their Condition by a Report of its Defects, and keep themſelves in Countenance, though they are excelled in a thouſand Virtues, if they believe they have in common with a great Perſon any one Fault. The Libeller falls in with this Humour, and gratifies this Baſeneſs of Temper, which is naturally an Enemy to extraordinary Merit. It is from this that Libel and Satyr are promiſcuouſly joined together in the Notions of the Vulgar, though the Satyriſt and Libeller differ as much as the Magiſtrate and the Murderer. In the Conſideration of human Life, the Satyriſt never falls upon Perſons who are not glaringly faulty, and the Libeller on none but who are conſpicuouſly commendable. Were I to expoſe any Vice in a good or great Man, it ſhould certainly be by correcting it in ſome one where that Crime was the moſt diſtinguiſhing Part of the Character; as Pages are chaſtized for the Admonition of Princes. When it is performed otherwiſe, the Vicious are kept in Credit, by placing Men of Merit in the ſame Accuſation. But all the Paſquils, Lampoons and Libels, we meet with now a Days, are a Sort of playing with the Four and twenty Letters, and throwing them into Names and Characters, without Senſe, Truth or Wit. In this Caſe, I am in great Perplexity to know whom they mean, and ſhould be in Diſtreſs for thoſe they abuſe, if I did not ſee their Judgment and Ingenuity in thoſe they commend. This is the true Way of examining a Libel; and when Men conſider, that no one Man living thinks the better of their Heroes and Patrons for the Panegyrick given 'em, none can think themſelves leſſen'd by their Invective. The Heroe or Patron in a Libel, is but a Scavenger to carry off the Dirt, and by that very Employment is the filthieſt Creature in the Street. Dedications and Panegyricks are frequently ridiculous, let 'em be addreſs'd where they will; but at the Front, or in the Body of a Libel, to commend a Man, is ſaying to the Perſons applauded, "My Lord, or, Sir, I have pull'd down all 'Men that the reſt of the World think Great and 'Honourable, and here is a clear Stage; you may 'as you pleaſe be valiant or wiſe; you may chooſe 'to be on the Military or Civil Liſt; for there is no 'one brave who commands, or juſt who has Pow'er: You may rule the World now it is empty, 'which exploded you when it was full: I have 'knocked out the Brains of all whom Mankind 'thought good for any Thing; and I doubt not, but 'you will reward that Invention, which found out 'the only Expedient to make your Lordſhip, or your 'Worſhip, of any Conſideration.

Had I the Honour to be in a Libel, and had eſcap'd the Approbation of the Author, I ſhould look upon it exactly in this Manner. But tho' it is a Thing thus perfectly indifferent, who is exalted or debaſed in ſuch Performances, yet it is not ſo with Relation to the Authors of them: Therefore I ſhall, for the Good of my Country, hereafter take upon me to puniſh theſe Wretches. What is already paſſed, may die away according to its Nature, and continue in its preſent Oblivion; but for the future, I ſhall take Notice of ſuch Enemies to Honour and Virtue, and preſerve them to immortal Infamy. Their Names ſhall give freſh Offence many Ages hence, and be deteſted a Thouſand Years after the Commiſſion of their Crime. It ſhall not avail, that theſe Children of Infamy publiſh their Works under feigned Names, or under none at all; for I am ſo perfectly well acquainted with the Styles of all my Contemporaries, that I ſhall not fail of doing them Juſtice, with their proper Names, and at their full Length. Let there-

therefore these Miscreants enjoy their present Act of Oblivion, and take Care how they offend hereafter. But to avert our Eyes from such Objects, it is methinks but requisite to settle our Opinion in the Case of Praise and Blame; and I believe, the only true Way to cure that Sensibility of Reproach, which is a common Weakness with the most virtuous Men, is to fix their Regard firmly upon only what is strictly true, in Relation to their Advantage, as well as Diminution. For if I am pleased with Commendation which I do not deserve, I shall from the same Temper be concerned at Scandal I do not deserve. But he that can think of false Applause, with as much Contempt as false Detraction, will certainly be prepared for all Adventures, and will become all Occasions. Undeserved Praise can please only those who want Merit, and undeserved Reproach frighten only those who want Sincerity. I have thought of this with so much Attention, that I fancy there can be no other Method in Nature found for the Cure of that Delicacy which gives good Men Pain under Calumny, but placing Satisfaction no where but in a just Sense of their own Integrity, without Regard to the Opinion of others. If we have not such a Foundation as this, there is no Help against Scandal, but being in Obscurity, which to noble Minds is not being at all. The Truth of it is, this Love of Praise dwells most in great and heroick Spirits; and those who most deserve it, have generally the most exquisite Relish of it. Methinks I see the renowned *Alexander*, after a painful and laborious March, amidst the Heats of a parched Soil and a burning Climate, sitting over the Head of a Fountain, and after a Draught of Water, pronounce that memorable Saying, Oh *Athenians*! How much do I suffer that you may speak well of me? The *Athenians* were at that Time the Learned of the World, and their Libels against *Alexander* were written as he was a profess'd Enemy of their State: But how monstrous would such Invectives have appear'd in *Macedonians*?

As Love of Reputation is a darling Passion in great Men, so the Defence of them in this Particular is the Business of every Man of Honour and Honesty. We should run on such an Occasion (as if a Publick Building was on Fire) to their Relief; and all who spread or publish such detestable Pieces as traduce their Merit, should be used like Incendiaries. It is the common Cause of our Country, to support the Reputation of those who serve it against Invaders; and every Man is attacked in the Person of that Neighbour who deserves well of him.

From my own Apartment, November 9.

The Chat I had to Day at *White*'s about Fame and Scandal, put me in Mind of a Person who has often writ to me unregarded, and has a very moderate Ambition in this Particular. His Name it seems is *Charles Lilly*, and he recommends himself to my Observation, as one that sold Snuff next Door to the *Fountain*-Tavern in the *Strand*, and was burnt out when he began to have a Reputation in his Way.

Mr. *Bickerstaff*,

'I Suppose, through a Hurry of Business, you have either forgot me, or lost my last of this 'Nature; which was, to beg the Favour of being 'advantagiously exposed in your Paper, chiefly for 'the Reputation of Snuff. Be pleased to pardon this 'Trouble, from,

S I R,

Your very humble Servant,

C. L.

I am a Perfumer, at the Corner of *Beaufort-Buildings* in the *Strand*.

This same *Charles* leaves it to me to say what I will of him, and I am not a little pleas'd with the ingenuous Manner of his Address. Taking Snuff is what I have declar'd against; but as his Holiness the Pope allows Whoring for the Taxes rais'd by the Ladies of Pleasure, so I, to repair the Loss of an unhappy Trader, indulge all Persons in that Custom who buy of *Charles*. There is something so particular in the Request of the Man, that I shall send for him before me, and believe, I shall find he has a Genius for Bawbles: If so, I shall for ought I know, at his Shop, give Licensed Canes to those who are really lame, and Tubes to those who are really short-sighted; and forbid all others to vend the same.

Advertisements.

THIS is to Certify, That I Anne Gimball, Daughter of Ezekiel Gimball in Christ-Church Parish in Southwark, was blind of Cataracts from my Birth, and continu'd so till I was Sixteen Years of Age, when I apply'd my self to Sir William Read, Her Majesty's Oculist, in Durham-yard in the Strand, London; who couch'd, and brought me to Sight of both my Eyes in less than Two Minuets, and have now so perfect a Sight, that I am capable of any Business; as is attested for the Benefit of the Publick, this 4th of Nov. 1709. Anne Gimball.

Witness, Ezekiel Gimball.

*** The Statutes at large, in Three Volumes; Wingate and Washington's Abridgments, with a Supplement to them; Mr. Clutterbuck's Plain and Rational Vindication and Explanation of the Liturgy; Dr. Gibson on the Sacrament, at 1 l. 5 s. per Hundred; Winchester Manuals; Bibles and Common Prayers of all Sorts, ruled or unruled; a fine Set of Cuts for the Common Prayer, engraved by Mr. Sturt; Dr. Nicolls's Paraphrase on the Common Prayer; the New Welch Common Prayer and Psalms, with or without Cuts; and Tate and Brady's Psalms, with the New Supplement; Bishop Beveridge's Catechism; Dr. Williams's Catechism; are sold by R. Whitledge, at the Bible and Ball in Ave-Mary-lane near Ludgate, at the lowest Prices.

*** The famous Medicine for curing the Cholick, that has for some Time been sold by Mr. Rogers, Bookseller in Fleet-street, at 2 s. and 6 d. the Paper, has lately cur'd a Gentlewoman near Penbridge of above 70 Years old, who had been afflicted with that Distemper at Times for above 40 Years, and for above half a Year last past had it without any Intermission, as appears by a Letter from a Friend of the Gentlewoman's sent to Mr. Rogers, dated July 9. 1709. which is to be seen at his Shop by any one that desires it.

*** A Military Dictionary: Explaining all difficult Terms in Martial Discipline, Fortification, and Gunnery. The Third Edition, Improv'd. To which is likewise added, a Sea Dictionary of all the Terms of Navigation. Both of them very useful (to all Persons that read the Publick News, or serve in the Army, Navy, or Militia) for the Understanding the Accounts of Sieges, Battles, and other Warlike and Marine Expeditions, which daily occur in this Time of Action. By Officers who serv'd several Years at Sea and Land. Printed; and sold by J. Morphew near Stationers-Hall. Price 1. s. 6 d.

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